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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine selected writings on the relationship of multiculturalism and school curricula in Canada. The promulgation of the Canadian Charter of Rights (1981), the Canadian Constitution (1983), and the Equality Now program (1984) led to increased multicultural concerns. The Equality Now program found that seven percent of the Canadian population are native peoples and Afro-Asians who believe they are denied equality of opportunity. Canadian scholars continue to debate the future focus of multicultural education, raise questions about its relationship to social justice, and suggest new methods of empowering the politically and educationally neglected minority groups. Visible minorities have used the political process to highlight various institutional insensitivities to cultural diversity. Additional research is needed concerning teachers' roles. A list of proposed multicultural activities for the Secretary of State, the proposed Ministry of Multiculturalism, the Canadian Council for Multicultural Education, governments, and school boards is included, along with a 27-item bibliography. (JHP)

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Research on Multiculturalism in the Curriculum from a Canadian Perspective

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Introduction

Miller and Seller (1985) writing from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, recognise "Curriculum development as an ongoing process" (p. 4) with key components: orientations, development, implementation, and evaluation. Each of Miller's seven orientations is itself seen in relationship to six issues: educational aims, conceptions of the learner, conception of the learning process, conception of the learning environment, conception of the teacher's role, and conception of how learning should be evaluated. Miller's perspective is that an educator is guided by "a cluster of two or three orientations to curriculum that form meta-orientations in curriculum programs" (p. 5), a concept linking curriculum practices to the philisophical/psychological/social concepts and backgrounds underpinning them. A special contribution of this book is its spotlighting of three meta-orientations, those of transmission, transaction, and transformation.

The purpose of this paper is to peruse the writings of some of the influential Canadian thinkers on multiculturalism and on the curriculum. An effort will be made to identify the role which has been projected for research and development in multiculturalism and the ideas for curriculum change which these efforts advise.

Constitution, Charter, Equality

Currently the significant Canadian event in multiculturalism centres on Equality Now (1984) and the parliamentary processes which spawned it. There is as well the predecessor activity, the Federal eleven-sites' race relations report, all occurring in the same era which produced the patriation of the Canadian Constitution (1983), and the promulgation of the Canadian Charter of Rights (1981). Constitution, Charter, and Equality have been pursued in Canada under the glare of the television cameras and by the ready pen of

journalists in major newspapers across the country.

The special committee on participation of visible minorities in Canadian Society was established in the House of Commons in June, 1983, with powers to retain experts and adjourn from place to place within Canada. Most of the Committee's sittings were in the largest urban centres, located in Southern Canada somewhat near to the U.S.A. border, and also in Whitehorse (Yukon) and Yellowknife (Northwest Territories).

The report of the special committee Equality Now (1984) gives glimpses of how Canadian Society (approximate population 27 million) is perceived in many aspects of its functioning: most visible minorities are not participating fully Canadian Society (p. 1); the non-whites 1,864,000 or 7% of the population (Native peoples and Afro-Asians) perceive that there has been "ample evidence of denial of equality of opportunity to.... them , of discrimination against them, and.... that the values highly cherished by the majority.... are often considered the only acceptable ones" (p. 4).

The sittings of the Special Committe surveyed views on social integration, employment, public policy, legal and justice issues, media and education. Their recommendations on education, as summarized in Table I, identify the paramountcy of institutional roles and the place which must be played in research and development through the federal and provincial

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Insert Table 1 about here

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ministries, school boards and a new umbrella voluntary "professional" organization the Canadian Council on Multicultural and Intercultural Education (CCMIE).

Currciulum Practices and Visible Minority Education

Ted T. Aoki, formerly of the University of Alberta, in his first Emeritus' address (Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 1986) examined four emerging curriculum themes. Central for our purposes is one of these themes:

> "Researching the meaning of the commonplaces of curriculum practices" (Aoki: 1986 p. 5).

Nowhere is the value of this theme shown to be more important than in native education evaluation findings (e.g., Cook, 1986). After examining a variety of data from communities, and schools, particularly in a Northern region of Saskatchewan, Cook located for the elementary grades two key needs: curriculum and instructional materials in (i) language arts (English and Cree) and in (ii) Cree culture. For Woodland Cree communities and their schools, she puts the prime responsibility for creating these products on the certified classroom teacher, rather than on the Cree language instructor, who is normally charged with this duty.

The implementation of this approach will require considerable underpining: logistical support from teacher training centres to aid with instructional design, evaluation and curriculum replanning. Lorrimer (1984) identifies that the formal elements of school in Canada are quite out of touch with the everyday realities and sensibilities of Canadian Culture and recommends a widely based and intensive effort be mounted to orient curricula, learning materials and teacher training to these (p. 109). In spite of Klesner's (1982) contributions and those by Barbara Burnaby (1980), minority race language instruction have not had an established place in Canadian multicultural education. This "commonplace" of multicultural education can not be commonly seen even in contexts where native or Afro-Asian students are

numerous as visible minority clients of the system. Research writings have illustrated some theoretical concepts, and named implementation departures that are futuristic.

For native education the research strategm that could prove dynamic is Mokakit.* An organization dedicated to research in education, it seeks to sharpen issues among native educators. It may come to have a strong voice in the topics in native education that are researched, and so influence the curriculum practices in native schools and programs. It is inconceivable that Mokakit could have emerged without the impetus given to research in the specially funded minority projects which mushroomed in the first 10 years 1971-1981 under the Multiculturalism Directorate of the federal Secretary of State Department.

Previous work that should contribute to curriculum change for native education include Ministry of Education, B.C. New Strategies in Indian Education, 1981. In this publication Saul Arbess discusses "Optimizing the Environment of the Intercultural Classroom for the Native Indian Student". He explains particular methods such as: that of the "supportive gadfly" (Kleinfeld 1972); and the multi-model learning environment validating "the child's own inner experience that lends immediacy and deep relevance to curriculum materials" (p.9). Later in this text Maureen Murdock speaks of the value of "Imagery Exercises in the Classroom",and the need to draw on native "traditional story telling abilities and rich visual imagery of the native student, encouraging them to verbalise their images (p. 17). Added to these are also Penny Joy's "materials that resulted from guided imagery exercises

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*Mokakit is headquartered at University of British Columbia with a Plains Cree from Manitoba, Verna Kirkness as President.

based on the interview format and children's presentations and productions in the classroom" (p.29).

Verriour (1985) advocates language development for all children by "Teaching through Drama Innovations". He is careful to remind us that when a class creates an imagined act,they are constructing a dramatic, fictional world in which they examine aspects of human nature of interest and concern to them. The teacher is charged with the responsibility of framing the drama in such a way that students are aware that the fictional world they are creating is only an illusion of reality through which they may catch a glimpse of the reality beyond".

Native teacher education, for example in British Columbia and New Brunswick, has created curricula which permit students to study for a portion of the program at community locations including "Reserves". Their successes have led to a special national program for preparing doctors somewhat similarly, that is with part of the "bridging" instructional activities occurring on Reserves and with the students in the "bridging" year or period, learning about the health care and healing practices customary among native peoples.

Like the native peoples, the Later Visible Minorities, Blacks and Asians took advantage of the Federal research grants' programs available in the first decade of multiculturalism. Some new curriculum products and writings about instructional techniques have flourished (see for example, Sheffe, 1975; Burke, 1984; D'Oyley & Pachai, 1979; and Teacher's Guide for New Friends, 1984).

The role of minority language (or heritage language) instruction as a significant aspect of the schools' response to multiculturalism has been reviewed previously (see Cummins, 1983; Shapson, 1984). Models of minority

language programs have been successfully developed to underlie both transitional and enrichment purposes. It is likely that minority group parents and community leaders will intensify their request for more widespread offering of heritage language programs to meet the legitimate educational needs of their children.

Categories of Multicultural Education

Jerrold Coombs (in press) contrasts Curricular Multicultural Education (CME), Procedural Multicultural Education (PME) and Social Multicultural Education (SME). Here CME is seen as requiring students to "study both their own culture and that of other groups in society....comparing and contrasting (the) cultural groups their histories and their problems in contemporary society" (p. 1); (PME) "focusses on characteristics that the process of schooling should possess" (p. 1); and SME works towards cultural pluralism and diversity. Coombs observes that Canadian multiculturalism bolsters the SME objectives.

Coombs' categories of multiculturalism assist our understanding of the relationship between multiculturalism and the curriculum. He points to philosophers' views that cultural pluralism implies social interaction between groups, a valuing of cultural diversity and "approximately equal political, economic and educational opportunity" (p. 10) between the groups. In Canada although there is an underlying valuing of cultural diversity, we find that the cultural groups are of unequal sizes and influence, and the institutions through which equal opportunities are pursued cannot now be regarded as "culturally sensitive". In fact many minority race Canadian writers, with careful reasoning, declare these institutions to be racist (e.g., Pachai, 1979).

This cultural insensitivity of Canadian institutions calls into question

their current ideological commitment and capacity to proceed seriously with innovations of the CME or PME type. The articulation of these two types of innovations has had little success, for Canadian institutions rarely dedicate their energies to these levels of multicultural reforms. In contrast to the Equality Now insistence on institutional top-down reform for CME and PME, Catherine Beattie of McMaster University cautions towards a type of educational innovation whereby "those at the bottom level, the teachers, formulate their goals", towards more "school antonomy", towards "curriculum development and implementation (as).....continuous processes engaged in by teachers" (p. 102). The judicious may lie between these two extremes as is the case in the development of the recent B.C. Social Studies Curriculum (1984).This curriculum revision was undertaken because the B.C. Ministry of Education recognised the disastrous omission of particular groups from the content. Included in the new curriculum development were groups from among the Native peoples who traditionally have been shut out from this type of creative activity.

Coombs argues (p. 18) convincingly that it is important for indviduals to "reason responsibly about the justice of individual actions towards others as well as the justice of social institutions and practices". Further conceptualization must be devoted to elaborating on how to contextualize institutional decision-making for budgeting and personnelling, and how to constitute teams devoted to teaching and curriculum development in line with the concepts of PME and SME.

It is rather the educational manager in the Canadian multicultural institution who ought to learn to reason well about curriculum content and experiencing, and to implement in a multiculturally sensitive manner the three (explicit, implicit and null) curricula about which Elliot Eisner writes

(Eisner p. 285). It is the contemporary educational manager's perception of the multicultural educational phenomenon (in which he participates) that requires the criticism and illumination demanded by the tenets of social justice. Here Coombs' central argument is a persuasive guide.

Werner's (no date), "Mutualistic Program Development", is illustrative of one of the many efforts towards new curriculum since the Federal Multicultural Policy of 1971. Werner records that the Alberta Department of Education constituted thirteen teams of parents, students, trustees, government consultants and local resource people to create curricula with Canadian content. To guide their activity the teams were provided with the following labels: "multualism", "co-activity" and "decentralization". After noting that each of the thirteen teams approached its work in its own way, Werner concluded that "there were insufficient conceptual understanding, developmental guidelines, and ongoing monitoring provided while the process was underway" (Werner, p. 4).

This venture in Alberta, although unsuccessful illustrates the questions and issues which should be considered at the origin of a curriculum development task:

-cooperative definition of roles, assumptions and obligations

-joint establishment of criteria for judging the program

-initial criteria for selecting participants from all groups

-inservicing the knowledge base of participants

-contextualising probable approaches to the task in hand.

It is surprising that these issues were not pre-clarified although the idea of a mutualistic style had its impetus in a number of events and educational writings in Alberta. Clearly senior provincial curriclum supervisors have responsibility for dynamic consultations on projects in the

voluntary sectors or in minority race contexts which traditionally house less than average technical expertise for building, implementing, evaluating and replanning curricula.

Summary

This cursory examination is evidence that, under the Federal Multiculturalism Policy (1971) many of the concerns of visible minorities continue to be aired, and more centrally so. Constitution, Charter of Rights and Equality Now further the intent of the Federal policy. Also Canadian scholars have wrestled philosophically (Coombs, in press) with the categorization of types of focuses within multicultural education, raised questions about their relationships to social justice and suggested new arrangements for empowering the formerly politically and educationally neglected minority groups (D'Oyley, 1984). The matter of reform of curriculum and instruction and the variety of models have received some scholarly attention (e.g., Beattie, 1982; Werner, no date). Visible minorities have used the political process to keep the spotlight on institutional insensitivities to the cultural diversity of the client pool. The role of the teachers has been researched less than these writers projected (see Shapson, 1984, p. 10).

Research in Canadian Multiculturalism and its effect on schooling ought to pursue more closely and rigorously the relationship between Transmission and the Transformation and Transaction Positions. For instance the Mutualistic approach would have been differently defined if it had given thought to the nature of Alberta's society (including its multicultural-multiracial quality). Miller and Sellar (1985) themselves should have gone further in their comprehensive text on Curriculum and examine, however cursorily, the potential for Canadian multiculturalism to impact on the curricular meta-orientations which their new text so imaginatively examined.

Table I

EQUALITY NOW Recommendations*

Research and Development in Multiculturalism and the Curriculum

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Secretary of State to:

- encourage provincial governments to urge school boards to development and implement race relations' policy.

Proposed Ministry of Multiculturalism to:

- encourage establishment of "national" Committee to evaluate teaching and resource materials against cultural or racial bias.
- mount major educational campaign towards best methods to overcome racial harassment in Canadian Schools.
- support the establishment of research centres and chairs of study.
- promote development and use of teaching and resource materials to facilitate more positive attitudes towards visible minorities at school.
- provide R and D funding for development of minimum standards for working in early childhood education, multicultural teaching materials, and curriculum materials to influence positively attitudes and values during early childhood education.

(CCMIE) Canadian Council for Multicultural & Intercultural Education should:

- examine the hidden curriculum.....

Governments and school boards to:

- introduce affirmative action programs to increase the number of visible minorities in teaching and administrative positions

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*See Equality Now pp. 140-141.

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